BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

BC Stats

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gov.bc.ca Issue: 08-07 February 15th, 2008

- **Exports fall 6.5% during 2007 as a strong loonie keeps the lid on prices**
- **Manufacturing shipments down 3.3% during the year; wood industry particularly hard-hit**
- **Cost of new housing continues to rise**

The Economy

- **BC product exports dropped 8.8% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December, as shipments to the US (-5.4%) declined for the sixth straight month while exports to overseas destinations plummeted (-13.1%).** Energy product exports to the US (-19.8%) and other countries (-18.3%) plunged, accounting for much of the overall decline. US-bound forest product exports were also off (-5.5%) in December, as were exports of most other types of commodities.

  Canadian exports slipped 3.1% to $36.7 billion. Shipments to the US retreated 1.3%, with even stronger declines in exports to the European Union (-8.3%) and Japan (-11.7%).

  Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in British Columbia edged down (-0.9%, *seasonally adjusted*) in December, following a 2.2% downturn in the previous month.** Producers of durable products continued to experience instability, with shipments falling (-2.1%) for a sixth straight month. The value of wood shipments (-3.9%) dropped, as prices for softwood and other wood products remained low. Producers of fabricated metals (-4.9%), computer & electronic products (-7.7%) and non-metallic minerals (-10.3%) posted big declines. On the non-durables side (+0.4%), shipments by paper (+2.8%) and food (+0.9%) producers were up, but other industries did not fare as well.

  Canadian factories shipped an estimated $48.6 billion in goods in December, 3.4% less than November, as shipments declined in six provinces. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **New motor vehicle sales in BC ended the year on a high note, improving (+2.9% *seasonally adjusted*) for second straight month in December.** Sales were up in all but two provinces, resulting in a 4.8% increase at the national level. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Relative to the same month of 2006, the cost of new housing in BC's largest city continued to climb in December.** Home builders in Vancouver received 6.4% more for their projects, while Victoria's housing price index was also up (+1.6%). Rising land value (+12.2%) in the capital city offset a decline in new housing prices (-4.4%). On the other hand, the increase in the cost of houses in Vancouver (+6.8%) continued to outpace that of land (+5.4%).

  Nationally, the new housing price index rose 6.2% during the twelve-month period ending in December. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

2007 in Review

- **BC product exports decreased 6.5% during 2007, slipping to $31.3 billion.** Declining prices pushed shipments of energy (-8.0%) and forestry (-9.3%) products down most notably, although exports were lower across all other major commodity groups. After consistently making gains in most recent years, exports of industrial goods (-2.9%) and machinery & equipment (-4.5%) lost ground last year. Agriculture & fishing products were also off (-3.2%). Ontario (-0.2%), PEI (-2.3%) and Quebec (-2.8%) were the only other provinces to see exports decline last year. Saskatchewan and Newfoundland (each +21.6%) posted the strongest growth.

  Canadian exports rose 2.1%, despite lower in-

Report **Older Workers in BC: Trends and Labour Market Characteristics**

Did you know...
43% of British Columbians like their mates to enjoy romantic walks, fireplaces & candles, while 20% prefer more active, outdoor activities such as camping & hiking. *Source: Ipsos Canada*

ternational shipments of forestry (-12.8%) and auto (-6.1%) products. Increased shipments to the European Union (+20.6%) and other emerging economies (+17.3%) offset a drop in Canadian exports to the US (-1.5%) and Japan (-3.5%). Shipments to India rose 10.0% (to $1.7 billion) last year and exports to China jumped 22.4% (to $8.8 billion). *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **British Columbia manufacturing shipments slipped 3.3% during 2007 as a sharp 6.5% decrease in the durables sector more than offset a relatively modest gain in non-durable goods (+1.1%)** Producers of non-metallic minerals (+3.1%), and primary (+4.0%) and fabricated (+8.3%) metals continued to post increases, but most manufacturing industries did not fare as well. Wood producers (-19.1%) recorded double-digit declines for the second year in a row. Prices for BC softwood lumber products dropped 6.2% last year, and this, together with the effects of a long labour dispute at coastal mills, a rising loonie and slower US economy, contributed to the decline in the wood industry. Manufacturers of food (-1.7%), chemicals (-4.7%) and computer & electronic products (-18.0%) also experienced notable decreases.

  Shipments by Canadian manufacturers inched up 0.3% last year. A slump in Canada's transportation sector (-1.6%) pulled Ontario's (-1.2%) overall shipments down in 2007. Manufacturers in most other provinces fared better.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **A total of 201,514 new cars, trucks and vans were driven off BC car lots last year, 3.5% more than in 2006 (*data for BC also includes the territories*).** Sales of North American-made passenger cars fell (-6.4%) for the fifth year in a row, but cars manufactured overseas (+9.1%) continued to enjoy a resurgence. Truck sales (+7.4% including those made in North America as well as overseas) increased for the third straight year.

  Despite recent slips, North American-made cars continue to dominate the market, with sales remaining higher (58% of passenger car sales) than for cars made outside North America. North American automakers also have a stranglehold on the market for trucks and vans, accounting for 86% of total sales. Despite high gas prices, new trucks and vans were slightly more popular with consumers than cars.

  Canadian sales were up 1.5%, reaching the second highest annual total on record.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

Agriculture

- **The national cattle herd shrank for the third consecutive year in 2007. Last year marked the second full year since 2002 that the American border has been open to shipments of Canadian cattle.** As of January 1st, 2008, the number of cattle on Canadian farms was estimated at 13.9 million, down 210,000 head (-1.5%) from a year earlier. The size of BC's herd dropped from 615,000 to 610,000 head during this period. Alberta (5.6 million), Saskatchewan (2.9 million) and Ontario (1.9 million) are the provinces with the biggest cattle herds. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Crime

- **In 2004, Canadian visible minorities experienced comparable rates of violent victimization to non-visible minorities (98 incidents compared with 107 incidents per 1,000 population).** While incidences of violent victimization (including sexual assault, robbery and physical assault) among younger (aged 15 to 24 years) age groups were similar to those for non-visible minorities, those in older age groups (aged 25 to 34 years and 35 years and over) experienced lower victimization rates than their non-visible-minority counterparts. In approximately 48% of violent incidents committed against visible minorities, the perpetrator was a stranger, compared to 44% of those committed against those who were not visible minorities.

  Nearly half (47%) of visible minority females and 39% of males reported that they would use public transportation alone after dark more often if they felt it to be more secure, compared to 29% and 22% of non-visible minorities. Overall, 81% of visible minorities who felt that they had experienced discrimination in 2004 believed that it was because of their race or ethnic origin.

  Data Source: SC Cat#85F0033MIE

***Infoline** Issue: 08-07*
February 15th, 2008

Infoline Report

Contact: Karen Kirby
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Originally published in
Earnings and Employment Trends issue 07-12

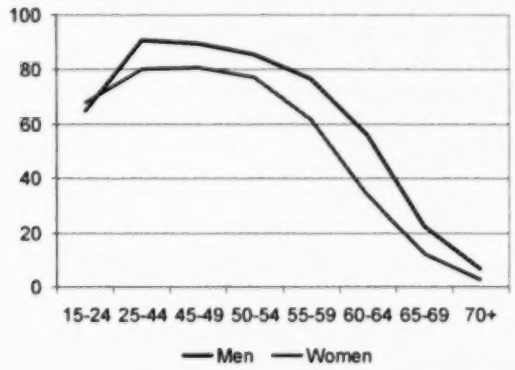
Older Workers in BC: Trends and Labour Market Characteristics

Introduction

Low unemployment rates along with an aging population point to potential labour market shortages in British Columbia. Older workers (those nearing or past retirement age) represent an important component of BC's labour force. As BC's population continues to age, older workers may play a critical role in alleviating potential labour market shortages.

This article focuses primarily on historical trends and labour market characteristics of older workers aged 55-64. Since most people are expected to retire sometime between age 55 and 64, this age group is of particular interest.[1] Although workers aged 65 and over may also form an important component of BC's labour force, labour force participation rates are quite low for those aged 65 and over.

Labour Force Participation Rates Fall Sharply After Age 55; Most Have Retired by Age 65



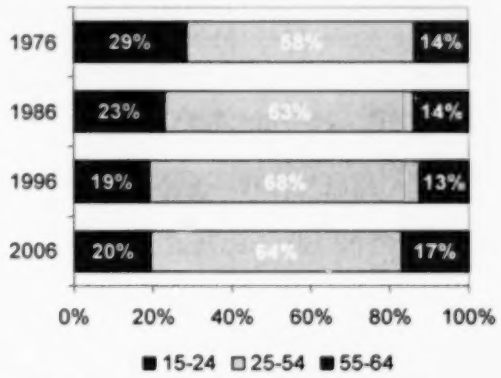
Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2006 (Data shown for BC)

1 Statistics Canada, "Participation of Older Workers", Perspective on Labour and Income, August 2007

BC's Aging Workforce

Over the past 30 years, the age structure of the BC population has changed considerably. As the baby boom generation has aged, the age structure of BC's working age population (aged 15-64) has also changed. Younger workers (aged 15-24) make up a considerably smaller portion of the total working age population than in the past. Approximately half of this decrease has been offset by an increase in older workers (aged 55-64) as a fraction of BC's total working age population.

Older Workers Represent an Increasing Proportion of BC's Working Age Population (Aged 15-64)

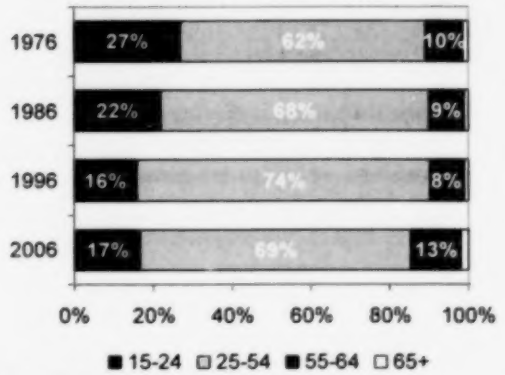


Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

As the age structure of BC's working age population has changed, so too has the age structure of BC's labour force (those actively participating in the labour market, either employed or looking for work). Younger workers (aged 15-24) make up a smaller share of the labour force than in the past. This can be explained partly by the declining share of the working age population accounted for by this age group, and partly by an increase in the average age that students transition into the labour market.

Together, these factors have combined to increase the relative share of older workers in BC's current labour market. Since 1976, the percentage of BC's labour force accounted for by workers aged 55-64 has increased from 10% to 13%.

Older Workers are Becoming an Increasingly Important Component of BC's Labour Force

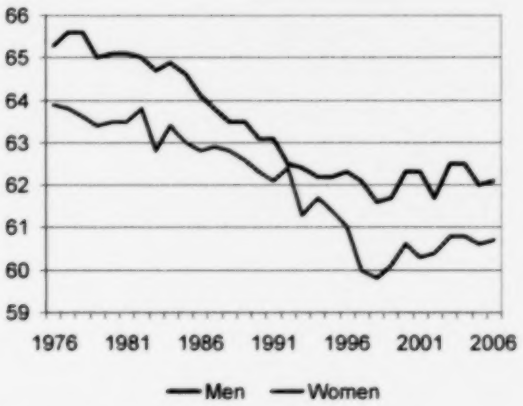


Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

Retirement Age Trends

Across Canada, the average retirement age fell relatively steadily between 1976 and 1998. In 1998, the average retirement age for men was 61.6 years, while for women it was 59.8 years. Since 1998, the average retirement ages for both men and women have risen. In 2006, the average retirement age for men was 62.1, and for women it was 60.7. Due to relatively small sample sizes, Labour Force Survey estimates of average retirement ages at the provincial level are too unreliable to examine short-term trends. However, the Labour Force Survey data indicate that the average retirement age in BC follows the same general trend as the national average.

The National Average Retirement Age Reached Its Lowest Point in 1998



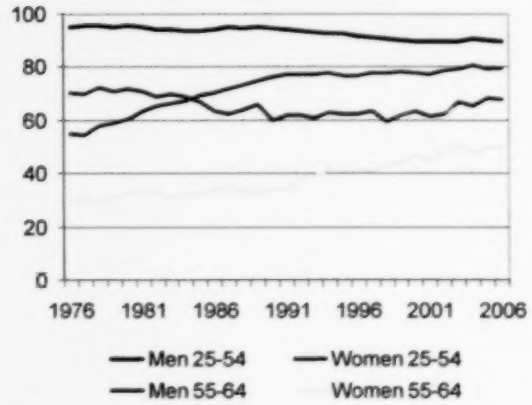
Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

Trends in Participation and Unemployment Rates of Older Workers

Trends in labour force participation rates of older workers over the past 30 years are quite different for men and women. In BC, men aged 55-64 showed a slow decline in their labour force participation rate between 1976 and 1990. The participation rate of older males was relatively stable for the next decade, but has steadily increased in recent years. The labour force participation rate of males aged 55-64 was 68% in 2006.

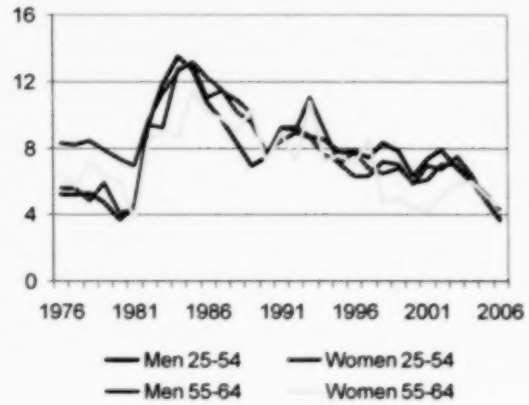
In contrast, BC women aged 55-64 have shown a steadily increasing labour force participation rate since 1976. This increase parallels the general increase in women's labour force participation of recent decades. The overall increase in the labour force participation rate of older women (up almost 20 percentage points since 1976) is similar to the overall increase in the labour force participation rate of women aged 25-54 (up 25 percentage points since 1976). In 2006, the labour force participation rate of females aged 55-64 was 50%.

The Labour Force Participation Rates of Older Workers Have Risen in Recent Years



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

Older Workers Have Similar Unemployment Rates as Workers Aged 25-54



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

The unemployment rates of older workers (both male and female) have closely paralleled the unemployment rates of their prime working aged (25-54) counterparts. While the unemployment rate of women aged 55-64 is usually lower than the unemployment rate of women aged 25-54, there is no general trend when comparing the unemployment rates of men aged 55-64 and men aged 25-54.

Based on unemployment rate data, it appears that labour market conditions affect the employment opportunities of older workers in much the same way as they affect the employment opportunities of workers aged 25-54.

Industries and Occupations of Older Workers

In 2006, the distribution of older workers across industries and occupations was remarkably similar to the distribution of prime working aged (25-54) workers across industries and occupations.

At the industry level, older workers were a little more likely to work in educational services (10%) and health care and social assistance (13%) than their 25-54 year old counterparts (of which 8% and 11% worked in these industries, respectively). Older men were slightly less likely to work in construction (12%, vs. 14% of 25-54 year old men), and older women were a little less likely to work in trade (13%, compared to 15% of 25-54 year old women).

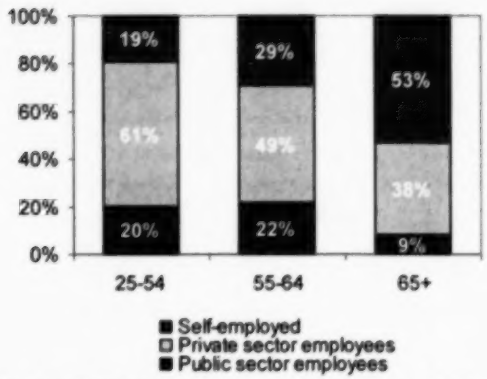
Older men were more likely to work in management occupations (17%) than their 25-54 year old counterparts (12%), which could be a direct result of increased years of experience. However, older men were less likely (8%) than 25-54 year old men (12%) to work in natural and applied sciences and related occupations.

The occupational differences between older women and women aged 25-54 were less pronounced, although older women were slightly more likely to work in health occupations (13%, vs. 11% of 25-54 year old women) and occupations in social science, education, government service and religion (14%, compared to 12% of 25-54 year old women).

Self-Employment Among Older Workers

Self-employment is far more prevalent among older workers than among their prime working aged counterparts. In 2006, 29% of workers aged 55-64 in BC were self-employed, while just 19% of workers aged 25-54 were self-employed. Beyond age 65, self-employment becomes even more common - over half of all BC workers aged 65 and over were self-employed in 2006.

Self-Employment is Common Among Older Workers

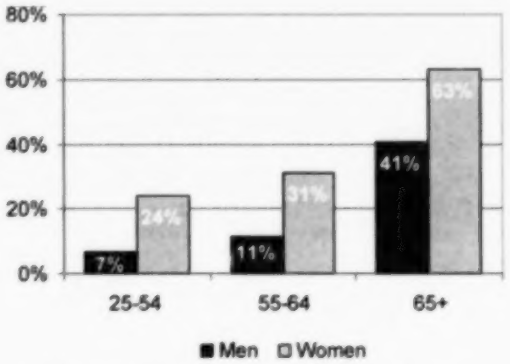


Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2006

Hours of Work

Compared to 25-54 year old workers, older workers are more likely to be employed part-time. In 2006, 11% of BC men aged 55-64 worked less than 30 hours per week at their main (or only) job, compared to just 7% of men aged 25-54. Women of all ages were more likely to work part-time than men, but older women (aged 55-64) were still more likely to work part-time (31%) than 25-54 year old women (24%).

Older Workers More Likely to Work Part-Time (Less than 30 hrs. per week at their main job)



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2006

When prime working aged (25-54) workers were asked why they worked part-time, in 2006, 28% said personal preference. The remainder stated other reasons such as caring for children, business conditions, going to school, illness, or other personal or family responsibilities. However, older workers (aged 55-64) were far more likely to say the reason they worked part-time was because of personal preference (69%).

Although older workers were more likely to work part-time, the average 55-64 year old worker did not necessarily work fewer hours per week than the average 25-54 year old worker in BC.

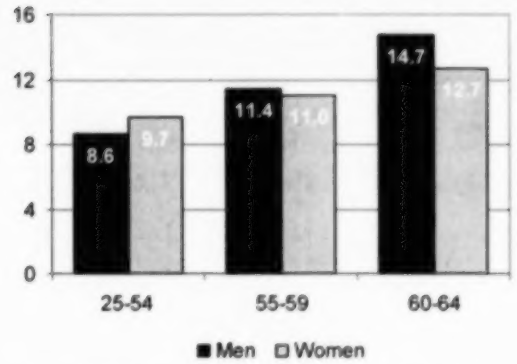
The Labour Force Survey asks workers to report the usual number of hours they work per week at their main job. In 2006, the average usual hours for men aged 25-54 was 40.9, while the average usual hours for men aged 55-64 was close behind at 40.3. Similarly, the average usual hours for women aged 25-54 was 34.1, while the average usual hours for women aged 55-64 was 32.7.

Absences from Work

Older workers are more likely than their 25-54 year old counterparts to be absent from work due to illness, disability, or other personal reasons. Furthermore, the average number of days lost from work per year is even higher for 60-64 year olds than for 55-59 year olds.

In 2006, the average number of days lost per year due to personal reasons was 11.4 for men aged 55-59, 14.7 for men aged 60-64, and only 8.6 for men aged 25-54. Similarly, women aged 55-59 lost an average of 11.0 days per year due to personal reasons (excluding maternity leave), while women aged 60-64 lost 12.7 days, and women aged 25-54 lost only 9.7 days.

The Average Number of Days Lost Per Year Due to Personal Reasons Increases with Age



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2006

Participation of Older Workers in BC Compared to the Rest of Canada

In 2006, older workers in BC were almost equally likely to participate in the labour force as older workers in the rest of Canada. At 68.0%, the labour force participation rate of men aged 55-64 in BC was slightly above the national average of 66.3%. The labour force participation rate of women aged 55-64 in BC (49.9%) was slightly below the national average of 51.3%.

Alberta and Saskatchewan had the highest participation rates for men aged 55-64 in 2006, with Alberta's rate at 78.6% and Manitoba's rate at 74.9%. The highest labour force participation rates of women aged 55-64 in 2006 were found in Alberta (60.7%), Manitoba (59.3%), and Saskatchewan (58.0%).

Strength in Numbers

A one-day conference delivering the latest Aboriginal data from the 2006 Census

Aboriginal Data Highlights from the 2006 Census

Statistics Canada, in cooperation with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, is pleased to present ***Strength in Numbers***, a one-day conference series featuring a panel of experts who will use recently released 2006 Census data to highlight demographic and socio-economic trends and patterns within the Aboriginal population. This one-day conference also features regional speakers, panel discussions and Q & As, information booths, and demonstrations on how to access the wealth of free information that is available on the Statistics Canada website (**www.statcan.ca**).

Who should attend?

Strength in Numbers will benefit those who want the most recent and comprehensive Aboriginal information available at national, regional, and community levels. This conference will be ideal for Aboriginal leaders, policy makers, community planners, program developers, managers, researchers and others who want first hand, relevant information. The conference material will also be a valuable resource for future reference and use.

Conference partner:

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada / Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada

Information on a variety of topics will be presented, including:

- Age and sex
- Aboriginal ancestry and identity
- Housing conditions
- Education
- Aboriginal youth
- Aboriginal languages
- Families
- Mobility and migration
- Labour market characteristics
- Urban and rural trends

National analysis and information as well as regional information for British Columbia will be featured at this conference.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS
Vancouver, BC
Tuesday, March 11, 2008
8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Exhibitor Booths and Trade Show space is available to promote your business or organization.

For more information and rates, please contact:

Mary McNeill
Aboriginal Communications Officer, BC & Yukon,
Statistics Canada
Ph: (604) 666-4996
Email: mary.mcneill@statcan.ca

Or visit:

www.strength-in-numbers.ca

Aussi disponible en français

Statistics Canada / Statistique Canada

Canada

Strength in Numbers

REGISTRATION FORM

Conference Accommodation

Until February 28, 2008, a special rate of $135 per night is available to Strength in Numbers conference participants at the:

Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre
1088 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC

To take advantage of this special rate, please telephone the in-house reservation line at: 1-604-893-7120 and quote "Statistics Canada Conference"

Registration Fees

Early Bird Rate
$75 + 5% GST= **$78.75**
(two weeks before conference date)

Group of 3 Rate
$200 + 5% GST= **$210.00**
(two weeks before conference date)

Regular Rate
$100 + 5% GST = **$105.00**
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Cancellation Policy: Substitutions are permitted, however, no refunds will be given for cancellations.

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(HW)

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February 15, 2008
Issue 08-07

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/07	% change on one year ago
BC	4,402.9	1.5
Canada	33,091.2	1.0
GDP and INCOME (Revised Nov 8)		
(BC - at market prices)	2006	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	180,328	6.4
GDP *($ 2002 millions)*	158,335	3.3
GDP *($ 2002 per Capita)*	36,649	1.9
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1997 per Capita)*	23,996	5.0
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Dec	3,395	-0.9
Merchandise Exports - Dec	2,238	-8.8
Retail Sales - Nov	4,762	0.2
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	% change on one year ago	12-month avg % change
(all items - Dec 2007)		
BC	1.2	Annual 1.8
Vancouver	1.3	average 2.0
Victoria	0.6	from 1.2
Canada	2.4	Stats Can 2.2
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Jan '08	prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,403	0.4
Employed - BC	2,305	0.5
Unemployed - BC	98	-2.9
		Dec '07
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	4.1	4.2
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	5.8	6.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Feb 136/08	Feb 14/07
Prime Business Rate	5.75	6.00
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.35	6.50
- 5 year	7.39	6.65
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Feb 136/08	Feb 14/07
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $ per US $	0.9995	1.1660
(closing rate) US $ per Cdn $	1.0030	0.8583
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jan '08	one year ago
BC	771.68	3.8
Canada	770.02	5.1

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

High Technology - 2007

Input Indicators of the British Columbia High Technology Sector - 2007 Edition

This publication highlights conditions affecting the province's high technology sector from a supply-side perspective by tracking 37 business and economic climate indicators for BC, with comparisons to other provinces.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/busind/hi_tech.asp#HTpubs

Topic Tables – 2006 Census

What are the top languages spoken at home in your community? Where were a community's immigrants born? A different approach.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen06/topics/topics.asp

2007 Municipal Populations

Total population for municipalities and Regional Districts for July 1, 2007, as well as revised figures for 2002 to 2006, are now online.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/estspop.asp

Area Profiles

There is a new link in the **RESOURCES** tab found at the bottom of our left sidebar. This page acts as a gateway to all our area profile products. Each profile paints a statistical picture of an area using maps, charts, tables, rankings, comparisons, and more. Eight thousand individual files are available now.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/dd/profiles.asp

Released this week by BC Stats

- Immigration Highlights, Third Quarter 2007
- Exports, December 2007

Next week

- Quarterly Regional Statistics, 4th Quarter 2007

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